

must be some charm in gifts which, though antiquated, can never flag with such a constant admirer. It was admitted that the performer had never gone through the rye, or defended general osculation, with such piquancy or success.

It soon came to eleven o'clock, when the pleasant doctor and rollicking-eyed Phelps had to depart. The Foragers were to walk home—Lucy, of course, attended by her lover; Mrs. Forager casting a look of pride at the handsome stairs and hall, and perhaps assuring herself of much delightful residence in this charming abode. There was a little brass lantern for family use, which Tom lighted; and giving his arm to his Lucy, set forth down the little private path; Mr. Forager and his lady following. It was a moonlight night, and the rays dappled the path before the steps of the "happy pair."

\* \* \* \* \*

Almost at the same moment, Billings the railway porter was tramping along the high road from the station with a tawny-coloured envelope in his pocket, for the speedy delivery of which he knew he should be handsomely rewarded. He arrived at Abbeylands about twelve o'clock, when Ned and his wife were in the deserted drawing-room, talking placidly over the happy scenes of that night. The immediate subject of their conversation was Lucy's boudoir. "In fact, my dear," said Ned, "I think the best and simplest thing would be what they do in France—throw down the west wall altogether, and build a small quarter for the happy pair. Give them, in short, a place of their own, which they can hold until I go under, when I suppose they must be welcome to this."

Mrs. Burton was ruminating abstractedly.

"It always seems to me so odd," she said, "about your brother giving up this place, one of the loveliest in England; it is incomprehensible."

"Not to me," he answered. "I comprehend. He knows what the woman would be capable of if they came home; he has great love for me, and he would not expose us to her vengeance."

"Vengeance, my dear old Ned! is not that a very old story now?"

"She has never forgiven me, or any of us.—What's that?"

The sound of the hall-bell was heard. In a moment the servant had brought in a tawny-coloured envelope. "Telegram for immediate delivery" was written outside, according to the regular formula. Ned looked at it with a sort of dull awe, timorous, uncertain whether he should open it. His wife came over and looked at it without speaking. It seemed like some torpedo which both were afraid even to touch.

"Why, what on earth does this mean?" said Ned impatiently, and almost at once tore it open. He read, and the wife read over his shoulder:—

"ALGIERS.

"We have some wonderful news for you. Lydia this morning gave birth to a son and heir, quite unexpectedly. Mother and child are both doing well. I am overjoyed, as you may imagine, but will take due care of you and yours. We shall come home to Abbeylands as soon as she is fit to travel. Will write by this post."

As they made out this last word, they heard the voice of Tom under the windows, singing, as he returned with his lantern.

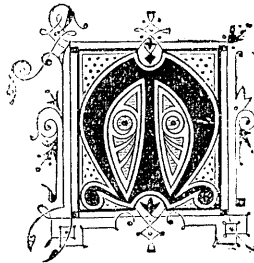
Poor disinherited Tom!

END OF CHAPTER THE THIRD.

## CHAPTERS FROM TRAVEL.

BY CAPTAIN RICHARD F. BURTON.

No. II.—PALMYRA.



Y next excursion was naturally to Palmyra. Until the spring of 1870, a traveller visiting Syria, for the express purpose perhaps of seeing "Tadmor in the wilderness," after being kept waiting for months at Damascus, had to return disappointed. Only the rich could afford the large Bedawin escort, for which even 6,000 francs and more have been demanded. Add to this the difficulties, hardships, and dangers of the journey, the heat of the arid Desert, want of water, chances of attack, the long forced marches by night and hiding by day, ending with a shabby halt of forty-eight hours at a place

for which so many sacrifices had been made, and where a fortnight is the minimum of time required.

Since the beginning of the last century, the Porte has had in view a military occupation of the caravan route between Damascus and the Euphrates. "The Turk will catch up your best mare on the back of a lame donkey," say the Arabs, little thinking what high praise they award to the conquering race. The *cordons militaires* were to extend from Damascus, *viâ* Jayrud, Karyatayn, Palmyra, and Sukhnah, to Dayr on the great river. The wells were to be commanded by block-houses, the roads to be cleared by movable columns, and thus the plundering Bedawin, who refuse all allegiance to the Sultan, would be kept, perforce, in the Dau or Desert between the easternmost offsets of the Anti-

Libanus and the fertile uplands of Nejd. This project, for which M. Raphael Denouville hopes and fears in his charming little work on the Palmyrene, was apparently rescued from the fate of good intentions by Omar Bey, a Hungarian officer, who had served the Porte since 1848. He moved from Hamah with a body of some 1,600 men—enough to cut his way through half the vermin in Araby the Unblest. Presently, after occupying Palmyra, building barracks and restoring the old Druze castle, he proceeded eastward to Sukhnah, whence he could communicate with the force expected to march westward from Baghdad. The welcome intelligence was hailed with joy—Palmyra, so long excluded from the Oriental tour, lay open to the European traveller; half a step had been taken towards an Euphrates Valley Railway. At Damascus men congratulated themselves upon the new line of frontier, which was naturally expected to strengthen and to extend the limits of Syria, and the merchant rejoiced to learn that his caravan would be no longer liable to wholesale plunder.

A fair vision doomed soon to fade! After six months or so of occupation, Omar Bey, whose men were half starving, became tired of Palmyra, and was recalled to Damascus. The garrison was reduced to 200 men under a captain, whose only friend was the Raki-flask, and the last I saw of the garrison was his orderly riding into Hums with two huge empty demi-johns dangling at his saddle-bow. The Bedawin waxed brave, and in the spring of 1871 I was obliged to send travellers to Palmyra by a long circuit, *viâ* the north and the north-west.

A certain official business compelled me to visit Karyatayn, which is within the jurisdiction of Damascus, and my wife resolved to accompany me. In this little enterprise I was warmly seconded by the Vicomte Fernand de Perrochel, a French traveller and author, who had twice visited Damascus in the hope of reaching Tadmor, and by M. Ionine, my Russian colleague. The Governor-General, the Field-Marshal commanding the Army of Syria, and other high officials lent us their best aid. We engaged a pair of dragomans, six servants, a cook, and eight muleteers; fourteen mules and eight baggage-asses, to carry tents and canteen, baggage and provisions; and we rode our own horses, being wrongly persuaded not to take donkeys—on long marches they would have been a pleasant change. We were peculiarly unfortunate in the choice of head dragoman—a certain Antun Wardi, who had Italianised his name to Rosa.

We altogether rejected the assistance of Mohammed, Shaykh of the Mezzab tribe, who has systematically fleeced travellers for a score of years. He demanded two napoleons a head for his wretched Arabs, sending a score when only one was wanted. Like all other chiefs, he would not guarantee his *protégés*, either in purse or person, against enemies,

but only against his own friends. He allowed them but two days at Palmyra. He made them march twenty instead of fifteen hours between Karyatayn and their destination. He concealed the fact that there are wells the whole way, in order to make them hire camels and buy water-skins; and besides harassing them with night marches, he organised sham-attacks, in order to make them duly appreciate his protection. I rejoice to say that Mohammed's occupation is now gone; his miserable tribe was three times plundered within eighteen months, and instead of fighting he fell back upon the Desert. May thus end all who oppose their petty interests to the general good—all that would shut roads instead of opening them! With a view of keeping up his title to escort travellers, he sent with us a clansman upon a well-bred mare and armed with the honourable spear; but M. de Perrochel hired the mare; the crest-fallen man was put upon a baggage-mule, and the poor spear was carried by a lame donkey.

Armed to the teeth, we set out in a chorus of groans and with general prognostications of evil. Ours was the first party since M. Dubois d'Angers was dangerously wounded, stripped, and turned out to die of hunger, thirst, and cold, because he would not salary the inevitable Bedawi. It would, doubtless, have been the interest of many and the delight of more to see us return in the scantiest of costume; consequently a false report presently flew abroad that we had been pursued and plundered by the Ishmaelites.

The first night of our journey was passed under caravans near the then ruined Khan Kusayr in the Merj, or Ager Damascenus, the fertile valley-plain east of the Syrian metropolis. The weather became unusually cold as, on the next morning, we left the foggy lowland and turned to the north-east, in order to cross the ridge-line of hills which, offsetting from the Anti-Libanus, runs from the capital towards the Desert, and afterwards sweeps round to Palmyra. The line of travel is a break in the ridge, the Darb el Thaniyyah (Road of the Col), which the Rev. Mr. Porter converts into Jebel el Tinîyeh (Mountain of Figs). Then gently descending, we fell into a northern depression, a section of that extensive valley in the Anti-Libanus which, under a variety of names, runs nearly straight north-east (more exactly, 60°) to Palmyra. Nothing can be more simple than the geography of the country. The traveller cannot lose his way in the Palmyra Valley without crossing the high and rugged mountains which hem it in on both sides, and if he be attacked by a razzia he can easily take refuge, and laugh at the Arab assailant. During the time of our journey the miserable little robber clans, Shitai and Ghiyas, had completely closed the country five hours' riding to the east of Damascus; whilst the Subai and the Anirzah bandits were making

the Merj a battle-field, and were threatening to burn down the peaceful villages. Even as we crossed the Darb el Thaniyyah we were saddened by the report that a razzia of Bedawin had the day before murdered a wretched peasant, within easy sight of the capital. This state of things was a national scandal to the Porte, which, of course, was never allowed to know the truth.

We resolved to advance slowly, to examine every object, and to follow the most indirect paths. Hence our march to Palmyra occupied eight days; we returned, however, in four, with horses that called loudly for a week's rest.

On the second day we dismissed our escort, one officer and two privates of irregular cavalry, who were worse than useless, and we slept at the house of Da'ás Agha, hereditary chief of Jayrud. A noted sabre, and able to bring 150 lances into the field, he was systematically neglected by the authorities because supposed to be friendly with foreigners. Shortly after my departure he barbarously tortured two wretched Arabs, throwing them into a pit full of fire, and practising upon them with his revolver. Thereupon he was at once taken into prime favour, and received the command of Hasyah.

Da'ás Agha escorted us from Jayrud with ten of his kinsmen mounted upon their best mares. In the bleak upland valley we suffered severely from weather, and the sleety south-wester which cut our faces on the return was a "caution." Travellers must be prepared for much more cold than they will experience at Damascus, and during the hot season they must travel by night.

At Karyatayn, which we reached on the fifth day, Omar Bey, who was waiting for rations, money, transport, in fact everything, offered us the most friendly welcome; and I gave protection to Shaykh Faris, in connection with the English post to Baghdad. The former detached with us eighty bayonets of regulars and twenty-five sabres of irregulars, commanded by two officers. This body presently put to flight everything in the way of Bedawin. A war party of two thousand men would not have attacked us, and I really believe that a band of thirty Englishmen, armed with breech-loading carbines and revolvers, could sweep clean the Desert of the Euphrates from end to end.

At Karyatayn we hired seventeen camels to carry water. This would have been a complete waste of money had we gone like other travellers by the Darb el Sultani, or high way. Some three hours' ride to the right or south of the road, amongst the hills bounding the Palmyra Valley, is a fine cistern, the Ayn el Wu'úl (Ibex Fountain), where water is never wanting. There is a still more direct road, *viâ* the remains of an aqueduct and a ruin in the Desert called "Kasr el Hayr," and looking like a church.

We chose, however, the little-known Baghdad or eastern road, called the Darb el Basir, from a well and ruin of that name. The next day we rested at a large deserted khan, or caravanserai, and on the eighth we made our entrance into Palmyra, where we were hospitably received by another Shaykh Faris. Our muleteers, for the convenience of their cattle, pitched the tents close to, and east of, the so-called Grand Colonnade, a malarious and unwholesome site. They should have encamped amongst the trees at a threshing-floor near three palms. Those who follow me are strongly advised not to lodge in the native village, whose mud huts, like wasps' nests, are all huddled within the ancient Temple of the Sun, or they may suffer from fever or ophthalmia. At present the water of Tadmor is like Harrogate, the climate is unhealthy, and the people are ragged and sickly. May is here, as in most parts of the northern hemisphere, the best travelling season, and in any but a phenomenal year like 1870, the traveller need not fear to encounter, as we did, ice and snow, siroccos, and furious south-westers.

If asked whether Palmyra be worth all this trouble, I should reply no, and yes. No, if you merely go there, stay two days, and return, especially after sighting nobler Ba'albak. Certainly not for the Grand Colonnade of weather-beaten limestone, by a stretch of courtesy called marble, which, rain-washed and earthquake-shaken, looks like a system of galleys. Not for the Temple of the Sun, the *fredaine* of a Roman emperor, a second-rate affair, an architectural evidence of Rome's declining days. Yes, if you would study the site and the environs, which are interesting and only partially explored, make excavations, and collect coins and tesserae, which may be bought for a song.

The site of Palmyra is very interesting. Like Pæstum, "she stands between the mountains and the sea;" like Damascus, she sits upon the eastern slopes of the Anti-Libanus, facing the Chol, or wilderness; but, unhappily, she has a dry torrent-bed, the Wady el Sayl, instead of a rushing Barada. She is built upon the shore-edge, where the sandy sea breaks upon its nearest headlands. This sea is the mysterious wilderness of the Euphrates, whose ships are camels, whose yachts are high-bred mares, and whose cock-boats are mules and asses. She is on the very threshold of the mountains, which the wild cavalry cannot scour as they do the level plain. And her position is such that we have not heard the last of the Tadmor, or, as the Arabs call her, Tudmur. Nor will it be difficult to revive her. A large tract can be placed under cultivation when there shall be protection for life and property. Old wells exist in the ruins; foresting the highlands to the north and west will cause rain; and the aqueducts which brought water

from Hums and Hamah, distant three to four days, may easily be repaired.

A description of the modern ruin of the great old depôt has employed many able pens. But very little has been said concerning the tomb-towers which have taken at Palmyra the place of the Egyptian pyramids. Here, as elsewhere in ancient Syria, sepulture was extramural, and every settlement was approached by one or more *Vie Appia* much resembling that of ancient Rome. At Palmyra there are, or rather were, notably two—one (south-west) upon the high road to Damascus, the other, north-west of the official or monumental city, formed, doubtless, the main approach from Hums and Hamah. The two are lined on both sides with these interesting monuments, whose squat, solid forms of gloomy and unsquared sandstone contrast remarkably with the bastard classical and Roman architecture, meretricious in all its details, and glittering from afar in white limestone. Inscriptions in the Palmyrene character prove that they date from 314 to 414 of the Seleucidan era; but they have evidently been restored, and this perhaps fixes the latest restoration.

It is probable that the heathen practice of mummification declined under the Roman rule, especially after A.D. 130, when the great half-way house again changed its name to Adrianopolis. Still, vestiges of the old custom are found in the Hauran and in the Druze mountain west of the great Auranitis Valley, extending deep into the second century, when, it is believed, the Himyaritic Benu Ghassan (Gassanides) of Damascus had abandoned their heathen faith for Christianity. I found in the cells fragments of mummies, and these, it is suspected, are the first ever brought to England. Nearly all the skulls contained date-stones, more or less, and a peach-stone and an apricot-stone were found under similar circumstances. At Shukkah, the ancient Saccæa, we picked up in the mummy-towers almond-shells with the sharp ends cut off and forming baby cups.

There are three tomb-towers at Palmyra still standing, and perhaps likely to yield good results. The people call them Kasr el Zaynah (Pretty Palace), Kasr el Azbâ (Palace of the Maiden), and Kasr el 'Arû (Palace of the Bride). They number four and five storeys, but the staircases, which run up the thickness of the walls, are broken, and so are the monolithic slabs that form the tower-floors. Explorers, therefore, must take with them ropes and hooks, ladders which will reach to eighty feet, planks to act as bridges, and a stout crow-bar—we had none of these requirements, nor could the wretched village produce them. I have but little doubt that the upper storeys contain tesserae, coins, and pottery, perhaps entire mummies. The value of the latter may be judged by the fact that Dr. C. Carter Blake, after carefully examining the

four ancient skulls which I deposited with the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain, pronounced them to be old Syrian or Phœnician.

The shortness of our visit allowed me only a day and a half to try the fortune of excavation at Palmyra. It was easy to hire a considerable number of labourers at 2½ piastres a head per diem—say sixpence—when in other places the wages would be at least double.

Operations began (April 15th) at the group of tomb-towers marked "Cemetery" in the handbook, and bearing west-south-west from the great Temple of the Sun. I chose this group because it appeared the oldest of the series. The fellahs, or peasants, know it as Kusûr abu Sayl (Palaces of the Father of a Torrent); and they stare when told that these massive buildings are not royal residences, but tombs. Here the loculi in the several stages were easily cleared out by my forty-five coolies, who had nothing but diminutive picks and hoes, grain-bags and body-cloths which they converted into baskets for removing sand and rubbish. But these cells and those of the adjacent ruins had before been ransacked, and they supplied nothing beyond skulls, bones, and shreds of mummy-cloth, whose dyes are remarkably brilliant.

The hands were then applied to an adjoining mound; it offered a tempting resemblance to the undulations of ground which cover the complicated chambered catacombs already laid open, and into one of which, some years ago, a camel fell, the roof having given way. After reaching a stratum of snow-white gypsum, which appeared to be artificial, though all hands agreed that it was not, we gave up the task as time pressed us hard. The third attempt laid open the foundation of a house, and showed us the well, or rain-cistern, shaped, as such reservoirs are still in the Holy Land, like a soda-water bottle. The fourth trial was more successful. During our absence the workmen came upon two oval slabs of soft limestone, each with its kit-cat in high relief. One was a man with straight features, short curly beard, and hair disposed, as appears to have been the fashion for both sexes, in three circular rolls. The other was a feminine bust with features of a type so exaggerated as to resemble the negro. A third and similar work of art was brought, but the head had been removed. It would be hard to explain to you the excitement caused by these wonderful discoveries. Report flew abroad that gold images of life-size had been dug up, and the least-disposed to exaggeration declared that chests full of gold coins and ingots had fallen to our lot.

On the next morning we left Palmyra, and after a hard gallop, which lasted for the best part of four days, we found ourselves, not much the worse for wear, at home in Damascus.