

## INTRODUCTION.

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MANY of the countries here illustrated were, till about a century since, almost sealed to the traveller's eye by the intolerance of the Turks. A journey to the East was to our ancestors, as "Sadak's waters of life," enchanting to the hope, precious to the soul, but guarded by a thousand dangers, terrors, and hardships. The songs of the wandering minstrels, full of tales of captivity and cruelty, of 'the heat that consumed by day, and the blast by night,' long kept up this impression. And in the castle hall, the harp's loved tones were of the knights who were slain, of the watch-fires gleaming on the dreary shores,—where the armies of Israel triumphed of old, and the mighty were broken.

The Pilgrim alone continued to visit the shrines and ruins of his faith, although he often gave his life for a prey: if he returned in safety, his relics and his legends were a live-long theme. But the good times of wild adventure, of delicious heroism, and suffering for the sake of the Cross—are gone for ever: men weep at the sepulchre of their Lord, and roam night and day the vales and hills of Judah—but they shed their blood no more, and cease to tell of sad separations from all they love, and of bitter and unspeakable sacrifices. It is true, that the wanderer in the East can no longer blend individual glorying or factitious excitements with the way: but his heart and fancy will be ever conscious of emotions, more pure and elevating than those of the crusader, the pilgrim, or the sceptic. Amid the forests of Lebanon, the ruins of the first illustrious churches, the solitudes of Midian or Padan-Aram,—throughout all "the land of the people of the East," he reads the progress of his faith, cherished, like the lonely child of Hagar—in the wilderness, beneath the shadow of the palm, by the fountain's side, till it became even "mightier than the angel, and at the rushing of its wings the nations were afraid."

The increasing facilities of conveyance already bring Palestine and Syria comparatively near to our own homes—and open to the traveller in Asia Minor, a scenery of more perfect and varied beauty than even Italy, Greece, or Spain can present. Her former cities are desolate: her fertile valleys untilled: and her rivers and harbours idle; but the despotism that has contributed to this ruinous state is, perhaps, soon to be destroyed: the half-independent and turbulent Pashas will be brought under the power of Ibrahim, and a state of comparative improvement and industry succeed to one of rapine, sloth, and misery. Yet it is strange, that while the spirit of modern discovery has

explored the most remote extremities of the globe, and the political convulsions of Europe forced the traveller into other continents—this extensive and famous territory should have so long remained undescribed, and comparatively unknown. Very valuable and interesting researches have recently been published on this subject; European travel begins to grow hacknied and familiar, and men sigh for some more novel and enterprising path:—many a footstep will soon be turned to this most interesting region—that contains the marches and battle-fields of Alexander and Cyrus; the precious remains of the seats of learning and the arts, of Asiatic refinement and luxury.

Most of the places illustrated in this Work had been visited by the writer, previous to the Egyptian invasion, when the land was in a state of comparative quiet, very favourable to a successful progress. To the Oriental traveller, the pleasures of memory are greater than those of hope: on his devious way, clouds and darkness often gather: the feuds of the chiefs may suddenly forbid all approach to the favourite ruin or city, imprison him in some hamlet or desert, where he is alone with his baffled hope and despair. Perhaps disease or contagion overtake him, where there is none to help. But when his warfare is over, and his objects attained, when his own hearth and roof-tree receive him—then memory wakes, to “sleep no more.” In the murmur of his native wave he fancies he hears the distant rush of the Nile or Euphrates: in the night wind the blast of the desert again passes by: and on the bleak moor that “Rock of ages,” that has been his shadow from the heat, again stands before him, desolate yet precious. These feelings may by some be deemed enthusiastic: but no man ever succeeded in an Eastern journey, plucked its roses from its many thorns, and, in spite of fears and sorrows, went on rejoicing in his way—who was not an enthusiast.

Once more to retrace this route, although in description only, to depict its features, that change not with the passage of time—is a welcome task. Some of the scenes are less familiar than others, for it is rarely possible that the traveller is permitted to look on all he has most desired to behold: the thirst of novelty and beauty, in temple, landscape, or in the homes of princes, grows with its indulgence; and he is inclined at last to estimate his success, less by what a favouring Providence has granted, than by what it has withheld.