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### **Travels and adventures in Egypt, Arabia and Persia**

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Chapter VI. Port Said to Jerusalem

## CHAPTER VI.

### PORT SAID TO JERUSALEM.

A Night on the Mediterranean—The Americans Fraternize—Bishop Harris—Jaffa, the Ancient Joppa—Noah, Andromeda, The King of Tyre and the Queen of Sheba, Simon the Tanner, Jonah, and Napoleon—The American Colony and its German Successor—Rolla Floyd—"Wanted, a Bergh"—Jaffa Oranges—Ramleh, the Ancient Arimathea—Our Landlord an Office-seeker—An Early Start—The Bishop Leads the Van—Gateway to the Plain—The Inn-keeper, with a "smile so child-like and bland"—Weary Pilgrims—A Good Old Methodist Hymn—Godfrey de Bouillon—We Pass the Jaffa Gate.



ON Sunday evening, we steamed out from the harbor of Port Said, and turning eastward, directed our course towards Jaffa, 150 miles distant. More than half the passengers were Americans, among whom were several ladies, all bound for the "Holy Land." The night was bright and clear, the sea smooth as glass, and we sat late on deck relating our several experiences in

Egypt, and weaving bright fancies of the land of sacred memories to which we were bound. Americans readily fraternize when they meet in a foreign land, and the *personel* of our party was unusually intelligent and interesting. It included Bishop Harris, of Chicago, whose genial

face seemed the mirror of a thoroughly good heart ; Mrs. B., of California, and two young gentlemen from Meadville, Pa., who had just returned from a trip up the Nile.

At nine o'clock the next morning we were off Jaffa, and as the sea was quite rough, there was considerable doubt expressed as to whether we could be landed. Jaffa harbor has gone to ruin, and steamers are obliged to anchor in the open roadstead, and in very rough weather it is impossible to land passengers.

Large boats, each manned by eight or ten Arabs, came alongside, and our thirty passengers—ten of whom were ladies—had to be dropped singly, as the boat rose on the waves, into the arms of the native boatmen. The performance was more amusing to the lookers on than to the actors. Much laughter and some screaming on the part of our lady friends greeted each successful feat.

Jaffa, the ancient Joppa, rises in the form of an amphitheatre, and makes a fine appearance from the sea ; but the steep, narrow, and crooked streets, reeking with filth, destroy the pleasing illusion as soon as one lands and attempts to make his way through the town. There are many interesting traditions associated with this place. At this port it is said that Noah built his ark. Here Andromeda was chained to the rock, and in Pliny's time the marks of the chain were still visible—mythology gets strangely mixed with Bible history in this country. The King of Tyre brought to this port the cedars of Lebanon for Solomon's temple. I think the Queen of Sheba came this way, but am not quite sure. The house of "Simon the Tanner" is shown, where Peter had his vision, and here Jonah embarked, but as the prophet had a "return ticket," the superstition of the sailors about having a parson on board did him no harm. Coming down to modern times, Jaffa was the scene in 1799 of one of Napoleon's

blackest crimes—the murdering of 4,000 Turkish prisoners and the poisoning of 500 of his own soldiers, sick of the plague, who could not be removed. This last story, though a part of English history, must be taken, like the former traditions, with a grain of allowance.

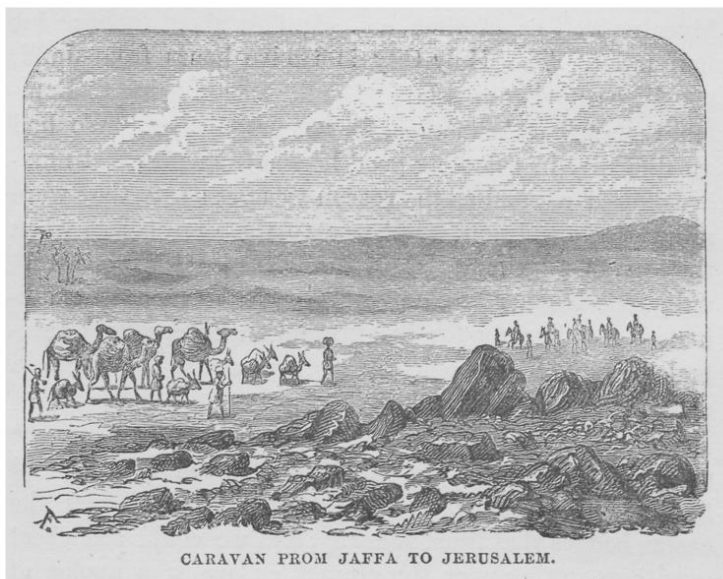
Outside the town, which contains about 5,000 inhabitants, upon high ground commanding a beautiful view of the sea and the surrounding country, we found an excellent hotel, and a cluster of neat white dwellings occupying the site of the unfortunate American colony which came here several years ago from Maine, with the delusive idea of restoring the prosperity of the Holy Land and rebuilding the temple of Solomon, under the leadership of a religious enthusiast, who proved to be a bad manager and quite incompetent to play the rôle of a Moses. They speedily came to grief, and after suffering many hardships and losses from sickness and famine, the miserable remnant was sent home at the expense of our government. Their property was sold to a company of Germans from Wurtemberg, who have somewhat similar religious ideas, based, as their pamphlet declares, “upon the sure word of prophecy.” They have been here now six years, and are very prosperous, numbering sixty families, and with characteristic industry and frugality, they have converted the waste land into a garden, with hundreds of acres of orange and lemon trees. All their property is held in common, and their spiritual and temporal manager, Pastor Hoffmann, is a man of no mean ability. Their proposed “restoration of the temple” is understood to be spiritual, not literal, which makes their prospects of success far more feasible. Mr. Rolla Floyd, the only one left of the unfortunate American colony, is favorably known to many tourists as the most reliable and accomplished dragoman

in Syria, and any party who can secure his services may consider themselves very fortunate.

After a capital lunch, our party of seven mounted their horses for the first stage of the forty miles' journey to Jerusalem. In this country the hour is a measure of distance as well as of time, and signifies about three and a half miles. The Holy City is twelve hours from Jaffa, usually occupying two days; the first stage being to Ramleh, the ancient Arimathea, four hours distant. We had no difficulty in selecting good horses from the great number offered us, and as the season was yet early, they were all in good condition. But woe to the poor beasts when the rush of pilgrims comes a few weeks later. The Arab, unlike his Hindoo brother, has no idea of mercy to animals. A "Society for the prevention of cruelty to animals," with a few efficient agents, would find here a splendid field for philanthropic effort.

For more than a mile our road was through orange groves loaded with their golden fruit—the largest and finest that I ever saw. Their branches reached over the cactus hedges that lined the way, and we could see great quantities rotting upon the ground, as one sees apples at home far in the country, where windfalls have no market value. Jaffa oranges are famous along the Mediterranean coast, and are the principal article of export. We pass hundreds of donkeys and camels laden with panniers of fruit, and boxes and bales of merchandise bound to Jerusalem. This road was built six years ago by the government, and is wide, smooth, and well graded. We see many gangs of men and women carrying baskets of dirt upon their heads, employed in repairing the damages to roadway and culverts caused by the late heavy rains. The road was constructed to facilitate the traffic between Jaffa and the interior, but Eastern prejudice prevents its being used

by vehicles. It is said that in all Palestine there is not a wheeled vehicle. Our four hours' ride was very pleasant, through fertile fields of young grain, and meadows upon which were grazing thousands of cattle and sheep, attended



CARAVAN FROM JAFFA TO JERUSALEM.

by Arabs in white turbans and long striped garments of camel hair. They are squatted on the ground smoking the inevitable *chibouk*, while their dogs are watching the flocks. They *salaam* to us respectfully as we ride by, and I can but wonder what ideas they have of the *Howadji*, masked behind their long-bearded, solemn faces.

Before dark we reach Ramleh, and finding both the Russian and the Latin convents nearly full, a portion of our party take possession of the so-called "hotel," a new institution now in its second year. Our landlord is a Dane, and has lost one eye, which defect he conceals with a pair of green spectacles. He welcomes us in fair English, and with his wife does all his limited accom-

modations will permit, to make us comfortable. We order dinner, and the cackling of chickens at once indicates what our bill of fare is to be. We sat late over the remains of our dinner (principally chicken bones) making merry with many a song, and story, and jest, until suddenly the landlord broke in upon our hilarity with the words: "I 'spose you don't know that I have served eight years in the American navy, and held the rank of Quartermaster?" Of course we didn't know it, and he went on to detail the ships he had served in. We at once warmed up towards a fellow-countryman, striving to make an honest living in such an out of the way place. I suggested that he ought to be appointed "Consul to Ramleh" so as to put his "hotel" under the protection of the stars and stripes; and promised to use all my political influence in his behalf. If pen and ink had been convenient I would at once have indited a letter setting forth his claims, to the President of the United States. He seemed immensely pleased with the idea, but like a good many other political aspirants he talked too much, and his next unfortunate remark, that he left the service in 1861, because he "would not fight against the South," was a damper, alike on his prospects of office and our sympathy. I was obliged to withdraw my promise of aid, and told him he had made the great mistake of his lifetime. Once started, however, his loquacity was hard to stop, and we were forced to break in upon his stories and say good night, to catch what little sleep the wicked fleas would allow us, in preparation for the hard journey in prospect on the morrow.

An early start the next morning, while the dew was yet glistening in the sun, was exhilarating to us all. As we filed out from Ramleh, we were joined by our fellow pilgrims, who had been hospitably entertained at the con-

vents. Our Syrian horses were sure footed, intelligent animals, and their natural pace is either a walk or a gallop. The impulse to try the latter was irresistible. Our California lady's experience in horseback riding on the Pacific coast, is now greatly to her advantage in this rough campaign. The portly Bishop soon led the van, and the white streamers on the ladies' hats were not far behind. Altogether it was a gay cavalcade, with no suggestion of the hardships or perils of an oriental pilgrimage.

Less than four hours brought us to Bab-el-Waud, the "gateway to the plain," where we stopped to lunch. Here I must record the only rascally imposition on our whole trip. The keeper of the wayside inn could only give us the plainest meal of bread, eggs, a can of sardines, and coffee, for which he demanded an outrageous price. It is one of the lessons I have learned, as a traveler, never to get angry at such trifles as exorbitant hotel bills or swindling hack drivers. It is far better to put aside, say, ten per cent. of one's estimate for traveling expenses, as an "overcharge fund," than to dispute a bill, lose one's temper, and thereby spoil a whole day's enjoyment. So we paid the bill and quietly told him he was an arrant knave, swindler, and rascal, adding other epithets equally derogatory to his self-respect. But he only bowed and grinned, as if we were paying him compliments, and all attempts to disturb his equanimity signally failed. He understood our little game, but was more than a match for us. As we were mounting our horses he brought out a box of cigars, and with a bow offered one to me as *baksheesh*. This was adding insult to injury. I took the cigar and flinging it over the wall I told the fellow with well-dissembled rage, that I would accept no *baksheesh* from such an unmitigated scoundrel. He bowed again and with a serene smile, sent a boy to pick up the cigar, and bade us "*au revoir*."



I felt myself vanquished, and rode away meditating how I could be even with him when on my return I should again pass through the "gateway to the plain."

From this place to Jerusalem was the hardest part of our journey. We now begin to ascend the "hills of Judea" and the road winds around the mountain sides with few signs of life or cultivation. The grade is nowhere very heavy, and much engineering skill is displayed in its construction. In some places high walls of rock protect the roadway alongside of deep ravines. Twice we climbed to the summits of mountain ranges from which we could see the Mediterranean, far away to the north. Descending to a deep valley we cross the brook Kedron, where David picked up the stone that killed Goliath. A few miles further, on a high hill, is the tomb of Samuel. Then we pass a desolate looking village where St. John was born. Not far distant is the place where, according to tradition, the Ark of God remained until taken to Jerusalem by David. This village was, many years ago, the residence of a renowned bandit, who spread terror through the surrounding country, until he was captured and executed by the Turkish soldiers.

The sun was uncomfortably warm, and the unwonted exercise began to tell upon the weaker members of our party. Silently in single file we climbed one hill after another, for Jerusalem is two thousand eight hundred feet above the sea, and some one struck up that old Methodist hymn,

"Jerusalem my happy home,  
Oh, how I long for thee,"

which was sung with a fervor that expressed our true feelings at the moment. As the last notes died away among the rocky hills, we reached a summit, when a curve

in the road brought to sight our longed for goal, about two miles distant.

That splendid painting by Kaulbach, on the walls of the new museum at Berlin, represents the brave old crusader, Godfrey de Bouillon, standing on this spot seven hundred years ago, surrounded by his army:

“Each throws his martial ornaments aside,  
The crested helmets with their plummy pride;  
To humble thoughts their lofty hearts they bend,  
And down their cheeks the pious tears descend.”

But our pilgrims are not sturdy knights, and are too weary for sentiment, so after a brief halt we turn our horses' heads toward the city, and in another half hour pass through the Jaffa Gate, guarded by Turkish soldiers, and find comfortable quarters at the Mediterranean Hotel.