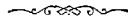


EASTERN JAULÂN AND WESTERN HAURÂN.



CHAPTER I.

GENERAL PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS.

THE present map (on the scale of $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch to 1 mile) represents a portion of *Eastern Jaulân* or *Ez Zawîyeh esh Shurkiyeh* and *Western Haurân*, and contains about 240 square miles. The whole of this country consists of a high plateau. It is bounded on the south-west by the hills of 'Ajlûn, and on the south by the Syrian Desert. In its extension from east to west it gradually slopes from the Jebel ed Drûs down to the western banks of the high tablelands of Jaulân, which overhang the eastern shore of the Lake of Tiberias; but it rises gradually from its southern to its northern limits, where occur the

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range of volcanic hills generally called Tellûl el Hesh, and the high lands of Jedûr.

The country shown in the map forms a part of the *Liwah*, the *Mutasarrifiyeh* or the *Sanjak* of the *Haurân*, whose Lieutenant-Governor or Mutasarrif resides at *Sheikh Sa'ad*. His jurisdiction, besides comprising the entire Haurân plateau, extends over the *Jebel ed Drûs*, 'Ajlûn, and the *Jaulân*; and his district is divided into several *Kaimakâmîyehs*, of which one is the *Kamakâmîyeh* of the *Jaulân*, with the seat of its government at *El Kuneitrah*. The *Jaulân* is further subdivided into three districts; viz.: (1) the northern part round *El Kuneitrah*, called *Esh Sharah*; (2) the southern and western part, *Ez Zawîyeh el Ghurbîyeh*; and (3) the eastern part, *Ez Zawîyeh esh Shurkîyeh*.

The natural boundary, as also the political division recognised by the present government, between *Haurân* and *Jaulân* is the *Nahr el 'Allân*; the boundary between *Jaulân* and 'Ajlûn is formed by the *Sharî'at el Menâdireh* (the ancient Hieromax or *Yarmûk*); while that between the *Haurân* and 'Ajlûn is the *Wâdy esh Shelâleh*. That portion of the *Liwah* of *Haurân* which is now surveyed is naturally divided into the two districts of (1) *Eastern Jaulân* or *Ez Zawîyeh esh Shurkîyeh*, and (2) *Western Haurân*.

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1. *Eastern Jaulân or Ez Zarwîyeh esh Shurkîyeh.*

This district of Jaulân is bounded on the south by the Shari'at el Menâdireh, and on the north extends to the *ÿisrs* (or Bridges) of 'Allân and *Rukkâd*, or even as far as *Ghadîr el Bustân*. On the east it is bounded by the gorge of the Nahr el 'Allân (Haurân), and on the west by the still more precipitous Nahr er Rukkâd. Its highest elevation, at *Ghadîr el Bustân*, reaches 1,912 feet; while its lowest inhabited village, not counting the Bedawin huts at Kuweyyeh, is *El Ekseir*, at 1,145 feet; but its average height may be put at 1,500 feet above the Mediterranean Sea. This high plateau is in its northern part (from Jamleh northwards) but little cultivated, except in the vicinity of the villages. It is covered with a multitude of volcanic mounds—the so-called *Rujm*, of basaltic formation—the summits of which, fenced round by basalt blocks, are used for sheepfolds, and termed *Sîar* by the Bedawin, who graze their flocks over this stony country, which produces a splendid pasture during the earlier spring. The appearance of these *Sîar* from a distance is likely to lead to the false impression that the country is covered with ruins. Each of the tribes of the 'Arab el 'Anazeh, the Fuddel, and the Nu'êm, who occupy this part of Jaulân, have their respective *Sîar* or *Isiar* (folds), which they consider as their own, and return to

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every successive spring; and should the Sîar be forcibly annexed by another tribe, such an action is regarded as a challenge, and a dispute becomes unavoidable. The Sîar are generally known by the name of the tribe they belong to. This northern region of volcanic mounds is called *Ej Jebâl*.*

The southern part of Eastern Jaulân, southwards from Jamleh, and east, west, and south from Esh Shejarah, is also of a basaltic formation, but bears a richer soil, being less stony, and is therefore more cultivated. The small tribe of 'Arab Izlûf cultivates wheat and barley in the vicinity of the prosperous town of Esh Shejarah. The 'Arab el Menâdireh camp in the valley of the ancient Hieromax, the Yarmûk River, or as it is now called, the Shari'at el Menâdireh. On the high plateau there are but few trees; there are, however, still here and there some remains of forests; and single oaks and terebinths

* Although, as is well known, the letter Jîm (ج) in classical Arabic is not counted as one of the 'Shamsiyeh'—*i.e.*, is not of those before which the *l* of the article *al* is to be assimilated—in the vulgar pronunciation of the Fellahîn of Western Palestine, and more especially among the tribes east of the Jordan, it counts as such; and they always pronounce 'Ej Jebâl' and not 'El Jebâl,' as is the rule in other countries, in accordance with the classical grammar. In the map and memoir, in order as much as possible to set down the exact local pronunciation of the names of places, I have adopted this Fellahîn and ungrammatical usage of Jîm as a 'Shamsiyeh,' and thus write Sahem ej Jaulân, Tell ej Jâbiyeh, etc.

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and stumps are dotted about the country; the slopes of the wādies, too, are still covered with brushwood. Neither the soil nor the climate here is inferior to that of 'Ajlûn, which is so thickly covered with oak forests; but owing to the great need of fuel during the rainy season, in a country where snowfall is a common occurrence, the nomad Bedawin and the villagers tear up every young tree before it has time to grow. Now and then, however, near villages, in the yard of a sheikh's dwelling, or to shade and shelter the whitewashed tomb of a Muhammedan saint, we find a single butm or terebinth (*Pistacia terebinthia*) tree, which has been spared, and which has grown to a large size. The villagers and Bedawin for their fuel as a rule make use of dried dung. But how highly wood is appreciated for this purpose is attested by the fact that, in order to prevent its removal by lawless hands, the Fellahîn woman who, after great efforts, has gathered some branches together, will pile them up during the summer in the yard surrounding the Wely of the Muhammedan saint who is buried at the village; and here an upright stick, surmounted by a coloured piece of cloth, marks it as hers. Under the protection of the Neby, the property is absolutely secure, for no Muhammedan would dare to touch it; ploughs also and other implements of agriculture are often found deposited near the Neby's grave, and it effec-

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tually protects these goods against Bedawin and robbers.

The descents from the mountain plateau to the gorges of the streams, owing to the peculiar basaltic formation, are often precipitous; and perpendicular cliffs of from 20 to 40 and even 60 feet occur. The southern banks of the Shari'at el Menâdireh, forming the northern boundary of 'Ajlûn, are less abrupt than are the northern banks which belong to Jaulân, for the basaltic region comes gradually to an end on the borders of northern 'Ajlûn. The Shari'ah in fact may be considered as the boundary between the basaltic region of the Jaulân and the limestones of 'Ajlûn. The bottom of the Shari'ah, as well as of the Rukkâd and 'Allân gorges, consists of a very soft limestone mass, while it is only the upper borders of the gorge, and the banks of streams that are of from 40 to 100 feet in height, that show the solid mass of basaltic blocks; but a more or less large accumulation of fragments of this volcanic stone is piled up on the intermediate slopes. One of the most curious instances of this formation is found at the peak between Jamleh and Kefr el Ma, on the Rukkâd. Here the Tell el Ehdeib, or Râs el Hâl, rises nearly perpendicularly from the valley of the Rukkâd (which is itself 528 feet above the level of the Mediterranean) to an elevation of 1,060 feet above the sea, thus forming a precipitous cliff 522 feet

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high. On its southern side, towards Jamleh, however, the Tell falls less abruptly, and after a descent of about 300 feet reaches the valley, through which flows a small brook. Thus at this place the Rukkâd Valley is divided into two halves, between which rises the Tel el Ehdeib, sloping gradually down towards the west, and forming, where the above-mentioned brook unites with the Rukkâd River, a cliff of but little height. On both the upper borders of the valley, which has here between Kefr el Ma and Jamleh a width of a mile and a half, but especially on its northern side, the high plateau is edged with basaltic cliffs, which rise precipitously above the sloping banks of the river. Great masses of basalt, which have fallen from the upper cliffs, here cover many parts of the slope, and have rolled into the bed of the stream, which in its rapid course has sometimes carried them even as far as the Shari'at el Menâdireh.

The watershed at this part of Jaulân has its culminating point at 'Ain Dakkar, and runs along a line from there to Kaukab, and thence along the eastern part of the Zawîyeh esh Shurkiyeh, thus keeping a line not far from and nearly parallel to the 'Allân, and extending southwards to El Ekseir. From this watershed the streams separate, one portion running westwards and south-westwards to the Rukkâd, and another portion southwards to the

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Sharî'at el Menâdireh. There are four perennial streams: 1. The *Sharî'at el Menâdireh*; 2. The *Rukkâd*; 3. The *Wâdy Seisûn* or *Wâdy 'Ain Dakkar*; and 4. The *'Allân*. Of these the first two and the last form the boundary of the *Zawîyeh esh Shurkiyeh*.

1. The *Sharî'at el Menâdireh* is the most remarkable stream of the country east of the Jordan, and it brings to that river about the same amount of water as the Jordan itself carries at the point of junction. Its name is derived, as above said, from the Bedawin tribe called El Menâdireh—Sharî'ah, شريعة, being the Arabic word for ford or watering-place, etc.—who graze their flocks in its valley and cultivate its slopes. The ancient name, *Hieromax*, is mentioned by Pliny; and Ritter ('*Erdkunde*,' xv. a; '*Palæstina u. Syrien*,' ii. a, p. 372) states that in the Talmud, according to Lightfoot's researches (Lightfoot, *Opp.* ii., *Centuria Chorogr.*, chap. iv. fol. 173), it is mentioned by the name of *Jarmoch* ('*Jarmoch fluvius in via ad Damascusum*'). The name *Yarmûk*, used in the twelfth century by Arabic authors, such as Edrisi and Abu'l Feda, must be the transcription of the ancient name *Hieromax*; while the name *'Irâk*, عراق, occasionally given to it by the inhabitants of Eastern Jaulân, simply means cliff, and is descriptive of the character of the river-banks.

During a meeting of Bedawin and other sheikhs, which took place at the large village of Esh Shejarah

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in Eastern Jaulân, I took occasion to inquire about the names in use amongst them for the 'great river' at the boundary of their lands. Their statements were as follows: '*Ehweir*, or '*Irâk*, is the name of the great wâdy rising in Northern Haurân, at a large place called Es Sunamein: it flows nearly due south, passing on its way Sheikh Miskîn, and bends near the Tell es Semen W.S.W. to Tell el Ash'ary, and thence more to the west again until it is joined by the 'Allân below Heit. The two united rivers, bearing the names of El Ehreir or 'Irâk, now flow for a short distance south-west, until they join the Shari'at el Menâdireh. The Shari'ah is fed by a second river called the *Moyet Zeizûn*. This stream rises under the name of Wâdy Zeidy (dry in summer) in the Jebel ed Drûs, and passing westwards the Nukrah of the Haurân, touches El Dera'ah, and is joined at Tell esh Shehâb by the Wâdy el Bajjeh, coming from the Bajjeh lake at El Mezeirîb; thence, taking a more northerly course under the name of Wâdy Tell esh Shehâb, below Zeizûn, it is further joined by a large stream, the *Moyet Zeizûn*, which name is now kept by the united streams until they join the Shari'ah el Menâdireh, very near the junction of the Ehreir. A third stream, the *Wâdy esh Shelâleh*, the boundary between the Haurân and 'Ajlûn, which carries but little water in summer, also falls into the Shari'ah just south of the junction

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of the Moyet Zeizûn. These three rivers, then, form the head of the great Shari'at el Menâdireh, which now flows south-west, and is lower down joined by the Rukkâd and several smaller wâdies.'

As I found these statements to be generally correct, as far as I could verify them, in the course of my surveys, I conclude that the name Shari'at el Menâdireh is applied to that river only from the point of junction of the Wâdies Ehreir, Zeizûn and Shelâleh, and is retained by it to its junction with the Jordan; and further, that the names Ehreir, 'Irâk, and also Yarmûk (a name which the sheikhs gave in connection with Ehreir) are applied solely to the wâdy rising at Es Surnamein, and running down to the Shari'ah.

This is the present nomenclature, but it may be remarked that the names *Hieromax*, *Yarmûk*, and *Farmoch* in the old geographers refer to the *whole course of the river from Es Surnamein (or at least from Tell el Ash'ary) to the Jordan.*

Throughout its course the Shari'at el Menâdireh is fed by springs, and further by the Nahr er Rukkâd, the Wâdy Keleit, and many streams coming in from the west. There are three tributaries in its upper part: (1) The Wâdy Ku'eilby, coming from Hartah in the 'Ajlûn, but of which the water-supply is small. (2) Further west, the Wâdy ez Zeyyatîn, which rises to the north at a ruin called Khurbet