

CHAPTER VI.

JAFFA, RAMLEH, AND THE HILL COUNTRY OF JUDEA

Is this thy place, Judea, this thy throne,
Where the wild desert rears its craggy stone ;
While suns, unblest, their angry lustre fling,
And way-worn pilgrims seek the scanty spring?

BISHOP HEBER.

As soon as we got out to sea, the wind changed, and blew in half a gale from the southward: the boat was undecked, and the sea broke over her at every plunge: the coast was iron-bound, and inhabited by robbers and outlaws, who found shelter in its desolation. At one tack we ran close to the extensive and imposing ruins of Athlit, the Castel Pelegrino of the Crusades; at another, the lurid moon revealed the ghastly remains of Cæsarea Philippi. When we neared the shore, the jackal's cry mingled with the wild passionate sobbing of the wind and the roar of the surf, and my poor horse would prick his ears at that familiar though dismal sound. Then the night closed in gloomily, and I fell asleep with the poor brute's head upon my knees, half wakened by every plunge of the creaking boat, and the moaning and struggles of my servant and horse, who seemed to suffer equal terror and distress. Daylight found us far from shore; the wind higher, and the waves wilder than ever, a burning sun burst out upon us, and burnt fierce headaches into our unsheltered and unturbaned brows. We had scarcely a rag of sail set to the storm, but when the gale caught us on the ridge of a wave we were gunwale-under in a moment, and the leaking seams of the labouring boat grated ominously in our ears. The Syrian sailors showed both nerve and skill; standing out bravely against the temptation to run before the wind and regain the port of Caiffa. The weary day past without variety, or any refreshment but hard eggs and