

CHAPTER XIV.

THE LEBANON.

On to the Mountain! To the Mountain, Druses!

R. BROWNING.

BEAUTIFUL Beyrout! It is not only now, when seen through the Claude Lorraine glass of Memory, that I yield to thee the palm over all the cities of the earth. Exacting, indeed, must the spirit be that does not rest contented with thy beauty, even while, lover-like, gazing on thee!

It is not only the magnificent scenery—the mountain, with its glens, like velvet folds, enclosing cascades like silver threads—the snowy peaks, the golden shore: nor the rich gardens that lie around the towered walls; the airy villages, with their silkworm sheds; the purple sea, and the rose-coloured sky—that invest the old Berytus with such a glory. But the kindling associations that start up at every view; the old Phœnician fame; the Greek, the Roman, the Christian, the Crusader's memory; every wave that foams along the shore once heaved beneath the ancient Argosies; every breeze that murmurs through the myrtle whispers of the banners that it once spread out over conquering armies, and the rich tresses that it toyed with in the Paphian bowers.

For Cyprus is almost in sight; yon distant promontory shelters Tripoli; those waters have weltered among the prostrate towers of Tyre and Sidon.

You command in an hour every spot within your view. You clap your hands, and an eager Arabian champs his bit: you loose the rein, and, swift as thought, you are careering through the Pine Forest, or scaling the mountain's side, or traversing the borderland of Palestine: but with that we have done for ever,