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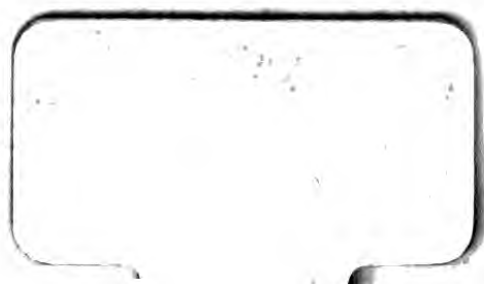


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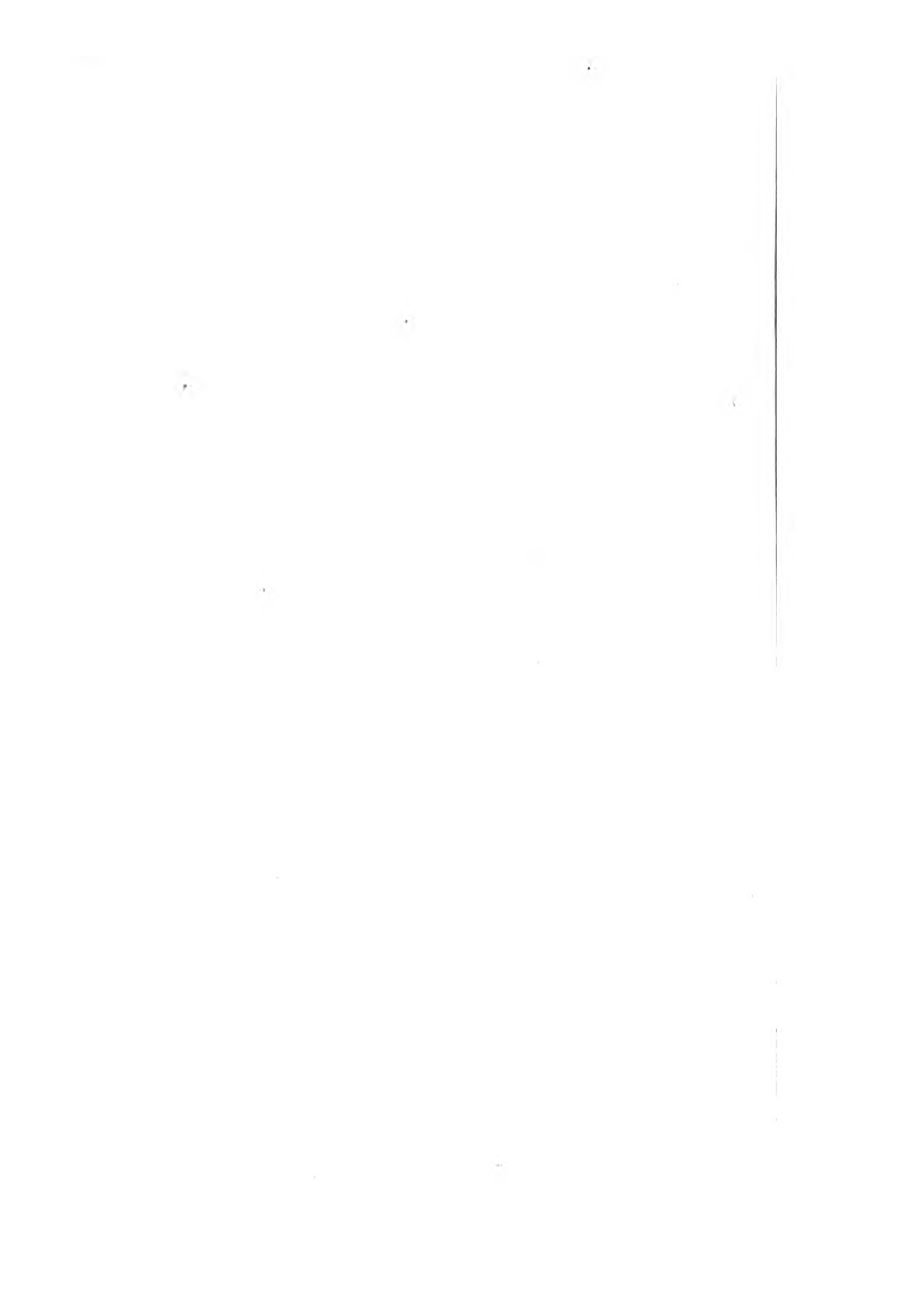


1840.

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SAILING DIRECTIONS

FOR THE

COAST OF SYRIA,

FROM

ANCIENT JOPPA

TO THE

GULF OF ISKENDEROON,

To accompany Chart and Views of the Coast.

BY

CAPTAIN EDWARD SMITH, R.N.

LONDON:

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P R E F A C E.

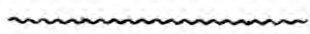
In appearing before the Public with a work of this description it seems to me to demand some explanation, and to assign some reason for it; without which, many might deem it presumption in so humble an individual, when so many scientific men are employed by their respective Governments with this specific object in view. I have, therefore, simply to state that when first I commenced Sketching, Sounding, and noting down the bearings, it was purely for my own amusement and information, not contemplating, at the time, its appearing in the shape of a Publication; and which I should not have carried into execution had not my attention been directed to the want of such a work by the Merchants and Consul at Beirout: and also two or three intelligent Com-

manders of British Merchant Vessels, who accompanied me in several of my shooting, fishing, and sketching excursions along the Coast; and, further, the circumstances which have occurred since I commenced sketching, in May last, would seem to render such a work still more desirable.

THE AUTHOR.

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OBSERVATIONS.



It would appear, from ancient descriptions of this coast, that at one period it possessed the most important maritime ports in the world, and that from its ancient cities, Tyre and Sidon, the commercial greatness of the world emanated; while the now flourishing towns and cities in Europe did not then exist, and the country was then in a state of barbarism.

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ERRATA.

- Page 12. 1st. line, for *too* read *to*.
 — 22. 3d. for *Southward*, read *Northward*.
 — 23. 3d. from bottom, for *Rhynzyr*, read *Kynzyr*.
 — 24. top line, do. do.
 — 29. line 6 from the top, for *upwards*, read *nearly*; omit the word *of*.
 — 30. 4th. Column for $32^{\circ} 58' 10''$ read 32 51 10.

OBSERVATIONS.

It would appear, from ancient descriptions of this coast, that at one period it possessed the most important maritime ports in the world, and that from its ancient cities, Tyre and Sidon, the commercial greatness of the world emanated; while the now flourishing towns and cities in Europe did not then exist, and the country was then in a state of barbarism.

But for centuries past these ports have been forsaken, commerce entirely destroyed, and where once those cities of riches, and the delight of men, stood, are only to be seen vestiges of ruins, and plains covered with sand: while silence and desolation reigns, appearing as if all its former beauty, grandeur, and riches,

had, with its tens of thousands of inhabitants, been swallowed up and buried either within the bowels of the earth, or beneath the waters of the Mediterranean sea, by which its shores are bounded.

To the western world but little comparatively has been known in the way of commerce ; and, although it is gradually increasing, but few of our present commercial marine are acquainted with its coast, localities, customs, &c. while a wide field lies open for such pursuits along an extensive line of coast, whose commerce is now confined within the limits of the sea-ports of Damascus and Aleppo ; the former Beirout, and the latter Iskenderoon.

It may not be unimportant to observe that there does appear (at the moment I write this) a pretty general expectation among the Syrians and mountaineers of an important change in the government of a country so full of interest, view it whatever way we may, but of too extensive a nature

to enter on in a work intended only to direct the sailor who may visit its shores, to be written in a style within the measure of his comprehension and solely for his guidance. That its ports are capable of vast improvements cannot be denied, and that a lucrative commerce might be introduced, present appearances bear us out in asserting.

While it would appear it only requires unison and activity on the part of the English, both consuls and merchants, and England may readily enjoy her proportion, as British manufactured goods are not only in request but eagerly sought after, for which, by care, industry, and management, the produce of the silk worm *alone* would create an ample fund to pay for; as in Syria it might be readily carried out to an indefinite quantity, even in the same ratio as the growth of cotton has increased in other states. Let but a just government be established in Syria, remove the authority of

the Mahometan, establish a government consistent with the creed of the Syrians and mountaineers, and its prosperity is as certain as that the sun rises (as it were) over the mountains of Lebanon, and sets in the dark blue waters of the Mediterranean sea in this part of the world.

During my short stay on this coast (about two months) I met with two or three intelligent men in command of British merchant vessels, each bringing out valuable cargoes of manufactured goods. The cargo of one of these vessels (although only the burthen of 140 tons) was worth £250,000. This vessel was from Liverpool, and, from what I could discover, the trade with Syria is almost exclusively from this flourishing sea-port. But the same vessel seldom makes a second voyage; of this, some notice will be taken in an addenda to these remarks and sailing directions.

Commanders of vessels running up the Mediterranean, and bound to the

coast of Syria, will do well to keep to the northward, and by so doing make the Island of Candia, or even in winter the Isle of Cyprus, both of which Islands are bold and on their south sides free from danger, and from whence a good departure may be obtained; while, on the contrary, by keeping too far to the southward they may get entangled with the low sand banks to the southward of ancient Joppa, and embarrassed with the currents and counter currents invariably met with in those seas, which frequently tend to perplex, particularly during winter, subject as they are to heavy N W gales, on a coast affording neither shelter nor anchorage at such seasons; and this may be observed also, generally, along the whole line of the Syrian coast, from the latitude of 32° to 37° north, and longitude 34° to 36° east, comprising a distance of nearly 400 miles.

Commencing with Jaffa (or ancient Joppa) it only affords a very miserable

shelter for boats inside a small extension of rugged rocks, over which the sea beats with much violence. Its roadstead in winter is altogether unsafe, and should not be approached, as all the gales blow home generally dead on the shore, and the sea so heavy that no common constructed vessel could beat off the coast if overtaken by one of them.

To the north and south of Jaffa, along an extensive line of coast, are nothing but sand heaps, presenting a most barren and dreary appearance from the sea. The General Book of Directions states, that while to the southward of the town the sands are white, to the northward the land is red, and names two Arab towers by which the place may be known. I observed that while to the southward, as far as the eye could descry, nothing but a white sand, that also for two miles to the northward of the town the same appearance continued, only rising higher than the sands to the

southward, and then the red land commenced; neither could I discover the towers, said to be marks by which Jaffa might be readily known; however, this port cannot be mistaken, as the town shows above the surrounding land in an insulated form, and its houses mostly domed, of a black and dreary appearance.

After leaving Joppa and sailing northward, the country assumes a pretty appearance, with numerous ruins along the sea coast; the principal of which, south of Cape Carmel (see views), are those on which the village or town of Arsuit stands, the ancient Apollinius, and Cæsarea, now a heap of ruins, once the principal sea-port (south of Cape Carmel,) Dora and Athtite, built on the ruins of Morio an ancient city, and is only apparently a village. There is no secure or safe anchorage for vessels of burthen from Jaffa to Carmel, but the coast may in fine weather be approached with safety, as there are no

dangers but steep and bold too, lying about NNE and SSW by compass, with a variation of 8° westerly or thereabouts, sufficiently accurate for the Seaman's purpose.

Cape Carmel, forming the southern boundary of the beautiful bay of Acre, has a bank of sand extending some distance from it, (its base or foot of the mountain touching the sea) inside of which bank, off the town of Kaifa, in westerly and southerly winds, will be found good anchorage: it is the best anchorage in this bay; as off Acre the ground is foul and you lie more exposed, although, generally in summer, ships may anchor along the whole line in from 12 to 10 or 8 fathoms (see views,) with vessels at anchor when these observations were made on 2nd May, 1840, and the views taken. At Acre there is a mole for coasters; but large vessels anchor in the roads, and, as during the navigable months, coasters are constantly passing and repassing,

these are always on a coast the best guide for strangers to go by ; they being conversant with the sets of currents, the changes of winds, &c.

While it may be observed should a vessel be bound to Jaffa from this bay with a strong N W wind it would be advisable to remain here until more moderate, as with such winds no communication could be had with the shore ; and the sea so heavy it would be dangerous to attempt to anchor in what is termed Jaffa roads.

The coast all along is extremely interesting, and a good harbour or two would be an invaluable acquisition.

In sailing across this bay northward, Cape Blanco forms its northern boundary, and is so called from its white and calcareous appearance. Off this cape the water is shoal, so that in rounding it care should be taken. It is of good discoverable height, but the castle named in the general book of directions has

disappeared: it bears from Cape Carmel about N E and its distance 15 miles.

From hence northward after rounding the Cape a vessel may haul in boldly for the land, and close it in fine weather to from 8 to 10 fathoms; or by steering N E by N 13 miles will bring her abreast of Ancient Tyre (see view). Along this line of coast is the ladder of the Tyrians, Solomon's well, and many ruins altogether interesting and picturesque.

Tyre itself has but a miserable port; and, at its back, a plain of barren sands gives to this once flourishing city a desolate appearance. There is no direct trade of any foreign description, but is alone frequented by coasters.

Following this line in a northerly direction 19 miles, is Sidon, the once rival of Tyre, for its beauty and greatness, now comparatively forlorn, but affording better shelter for shipping and greater extent than Tyre. Here vessels

may anchor in six fathoms, inside a reef of rocks extending 240 fathoms. Its inhabitants are mostly of a cast with which a stranger might be pleased: we met with the utmost kindness and attention at this place; it is capable of being made a safe and secure port, and is the nearest and best road to Damascus from the sea-side. It is stated that if the Pacha* of Egypt holds possession, it is his intention to make it the sea-port of Damascus instead of Beirout.

In leaving Sidon, northward, the coast is interesting and (if not beautiful) very pretty, and which during all the fine season may be coasted along within half a mile or less, taking an occasional cast of the lead in eight fathoms; this is near enough to come, haul-

* He has done more in the way of improvements both in Egypt and Syria, since his authority has been his own, than ever was done under the Sultan's rule; at least, so says those conversant with the matter.

ing farther off as a vessel approaches the red and white sand hills, south of Beirout. The red hills are very high, and by which you may know your near approach to cape Beirout, together with its appearing at a distance like an island.

This Cape has some very dangerous rocks lying off it, which, by a heavy ship, must be carefully avoided in rounding; but, coming in from the southward, and opening the town, which cannot be mistaken, you may haul boldly in and anchor at pleasure in from 15 to 9 fathoms (see views). And here it may be observed that in these roads (for harbours there are none) it is dangerous during the stormy season of the year, and very troublesome even in summer, at times; for, although as observed in the general book of directions, the wind, at those seasons do not blow home, it throws in a heavy swell; and ships by a rebound of this swell from the shore, in what is termed an undertow, are thrown athwart,

and roll sometimes dangerously heavy. We were, during our stay under such circumstances, frequently obliged to get underweigh and stand out to sea.

To the eastward of Beirout is St. George's Bay and River, off which is good anchorage in from 14 to 8 fathoms, considered to be more sheltered than Beirout Roads from the effects of strong northerly winds, and has this advantage that should a vessel part from her anchors or drift on shore during a gale, the shore is bound by sand, and a vessel may be got off again when the weather moderates : not so in Beirout roads, as the shore is bounded by rocks, and at the point of the Cape dangerously so ; consequently, in winter, should a vessel be on this coast, the bay is to be preferred : not so in summer, the land being low and swampy, and its exhalations produce sickness among the crews of vessels frequenting it, while its distance from Beirout is objectionable to merchant ships with cargoes.

On the north-eastern side of this bay is the Nahr el Kelb (or Dog River). On visiting this spot (considered by the Beirutians a place of great interest and beauty,) we made the following observations.

This river is formed by an immense gorge in the Lebanus, magnificently grand. It derives its name from a large rock which stood on an eminence at its southern entrance, resembling a dog. The figure, which is of an enormous size, has fallen, and is now washed by the sea, over which, in heavy gales from the southward, it breaks with much violence, while its base alone remains in its original spot: close to which an ancient Roman road is cut out of the side of the Lebanus, which before it would appear hung perpendicularly over the sea. The face or sides of the rock is thickly indented with enormous monumental sculpture of Roman work and figures, on its north side is an extensive Roman aqueduct fallen into decay, the water which streams

into its ruins from the mount of Lebanon, oozes through the arches, fertilizing the rich plantations beneath. This spot must have been an important station of the Roman army when they invaded Jerusalem and Syria, as many monuments remain to the memory of their fallen warriors. The valley formed between the gorge is beautifully picturesque, and the neighbouring Lebanon densely populated. Across the river is a very neat bridge consisting of three arches, about one-sixth of a mile from its entrance, which no boat should attempt with a southerly swell, as the counteraction of the stream running out with great force renders it extremely dangerous; and, under such circumstances, it is much safer to beach a boat on either side its entrance than to pull direct for the river's mouth. The water of this river is the best on the coast and is excellent.

North of this I am indebted to Mr. William Evans, master of the schooner

British Queen, of Plymouth, for much information, and the views of the coast shown on the chart, to which his name is attached; as the disturbance which took place between the mountaineers and Mehemet Ali's troops interrupted my progress, and directed my attention to afford all the assistance I could to the mountaineers (as I considered their cause a righteous one,) under these circumstances; and being narrowly watched by the Egyptian sloops of war then on the coast, with not a single British ship of war on the station, to protect her commerce, while a schooner from Liverpool, of only 140 tons burthen, had a cargo of British merchandize of the value of £250,000.: and when the mountaineers drove within the walls of Beirout the troops of the Pacha, and made an attack on the town, a shot was fired across the schooner's bows from a fort in possession of the Egyptians, she lying quite in an

opposite direction to where the mountaineers had possession.

From the Dog river the coast bends northward to Cape Madonna, a projecting headland, between which are many villages, towns, and ancient Roman ruins: the river Ibrahim proceeds also from a gorge of the inland mountains. From Cape Madonna the land again tends to the N E to the bay of Tripoli, and is about 12 miles from the southernmost point of this bay. On this point a British schooner struck and received considerable damage in April, 1840.

From this point a ledge of rocks stretches to the northward; to the north of which a vessel may sail into the bay in 10 or 12 fathoms water, which is about 2 miles to the south-eastward, and anchor in from 5 to 6 fathoms; but, like all the bays or roadsteads along this line of coast, it can only be said to be safe for anchorage during

the summer season, as the winds are violent during winter and blow home.

Twenty-four miles to the southward of Tripoli is the Isle of Tortoso; it is rocky and has a fort on it; inside of which is anchorage, but does not afford much shelter. Between the points is a river called, in the Arabic, the Nohr et Bered or Cold River, lying 6 miles north of Tripoli, and 18 miles south of Tortosa.

At about 20 miles N N E of this Island is the village of Markab; and 9 miles to the northward of Markab is the Nahr el Mulk, a small river, at the entrance of which are ruins by which it may be distinguished. Hence, northward, 5 miles or thereabouts, is the town of Ancient Gabola; it stands at the foot of a mountain on the coast, and has the ruins of a fine theatre, and others of Roman antiquity, at its north end.

From Gabola, in a N by W direction, about 12 miles, is Latakia. This town

stands on the S E side of Cape Ziaret, and has its plantations similar to those of Beirout and other towns on the Syrian coast, and is the ancient Laodicea ad Mare.

From Cape Ziaret, about N by E 23 miles, is Cape Possidi, the southern point of the bay of Antioch, at the entrance of which is the Isle of Malaba, under which it is said there is anchorage. From hence, in an easterly direction, about twenty miles up the bay of the same name, is Antioch, at the mouth of the river Orontes, which river is the largest in Syria, and said to be navigable for large boats about sixty miles from the sea. This portion of Syria is the most beautiful part of it, but has, during these last few years, been sadly ravaged by earthquakes. From Cape Passidi the coast bends to the northward, and 23 miles in this direction is Cape Rhynzyr, passing mount Peria which is nearly 5000 feet high.

Cape Rhynzyr forms the southern entrance of the bay or gulf of Iskenderoon: it is high and steep, the mountains skirting it to the sea shore, and Karadash—Bournou, its northern. Karadash is a white cliff stunted with trees on its summit. The entrance of this bay is about 25 miles across, and on its southern side about 30 miles from Cape Kynzyr is Iskenderoon, the sea-port of Aleppo; it consists of a few huts and Consular Agent's House; is a miserable, low, swampy place, very sickly, but where merchant vessels discharge their cargoes for Aleppo, and that too in their own boats, as not the slightest accommodation is to be obtained here. Of this more in the addenda.

Vessels lie in from 9 to 6 fathoms off shore half a mile, and this port, if it may be so called, and Beirout are the only two at present to which British ships trade along the whole coast of Syria.

ADDENDA.

As these plain directions are principally intended for the use of our commercial marine, it may be well to observe, for the guidance of ship owners and ship masters chartering their vessels for this part of the world, that it is seldom that a return cargo is to be obtained excepting occasionally Madder roots, and some other description of vegetable dyes; consequently the nearest loading ports are Alexandria or Smyrna, one 800 miles, the other about 400, and that during the shipping season for this coast it will take a vessel in ballast (*with close attention*) *at least 3 weeks* to beat up to Smyrna, as very strong northerly winds constantly prevail and the passage to Alexandria equally long in proportion; although it may be said a vessel in going to Alexandria is so far on her passage home, but meeting with strong NW. winds which frequently blow; when in ballast a vessel will not make

such good way as when deeper in the water.

While at Beirout when the weather is favourable a vessel discharges her cargo quickly, as there are plenty of boats. At Iskenderoon, schooners, which are, generally, the description of vessel employed, having only one boat, have to discharge the whole of her cargo by that means only.

Under these circumstances it is for the owner of a vessel to consider if more freight ought not to be given, as it will be seen that the freight bears no proportion to the value of the cargoes sent. For instance, a Broker took up a schooner at a lump sum of £300 or £340; the cargo she brought out was said to be worth £250,000, part to be delivered at Beirout and part at Iskenderoon, the most valuable at the latter port, in a small boat belonging to the vessel and all at the risk of the owners or masters, until safely landed. The distance, at a rough guess, from Liverpool is about 3000 miles; and at

neither of these ports are return cargoes to be obtained by one ship in ten.

Further, the payment of the freight in the present state is frequently undefined, the receivers of the goods after the cargoes are delivered, have to send to Damascus or Aleppo for it. This occasions detention; and, if it is not particularly specified in the charter-party in what way it is to be paid, it is sent down in a hundred different coins, hardly known in this country, requiring a whole day to count out £100; thus, not only perplexing the master of a vessel, but occasioning considerable detention.

Spanish pillar dollars should be named in each charter-party at the sterling value they bear in England, at the time the vessel sails, and the agents at the sea-ports to pay the amount in 48 hours after the cargo is landed, giving time for the vessel to prepare for sea. A vessel taking so valuable a cargo 3000 miles under such circumstances, ought to have

at least £600. unless a return cargo is provided by the Charterer.

Of winds and currents along this coast it may be said that the most prevalent are the westerly, which although during the summer they do not blow home, they throw in a very troublesome swell. It is generally stated that the currents set to the northward and commanders of vessels are cautioned in making the ports they are bound to, to keep to the southward until they ascertain their position on making the land. I trust the views I have given will tend to lessen errors of this sort, as ships are very frequently at a loss in this respect.

Having had only a short time for performing the work I now present to the public, I did not presume to alter in any way the latitudes or longitudes as laid down; although, from the observations made, I have reason to suppose that there is an error in the latitude of Cape Beirout and other places, as

much as 5 or 6 miles ; but as the distance from one point to another appears correct, if one point is laid down wrong the others must be the same ; the whole line of coast tends nearly north and south, being only a difference of 2° of longitude in a distance of upwards of 400 miles.

At Beirout we observed that a regular ebb and flow of the tides took place, at the full and change of the moon a set of about two knots an hour opposed to the direction of the wind, with a rise of three feet perpendicular. At the other ports visited we had not an opportunity of proving this so accurately, although, at Sidon, a rise and fall of tide was observed, which leads to the conclusion that it is general along other parts of the coast. In the chart is given the ancient names, as better known to British seamen than those substituted by the Turks and others, who have been in authority along these shores for so long a period.

Bearings and Distances, Latitudes, Longitudes, Temperature, and State of the Atmosphere.

Names of Places.	Bearings.	Distance.	Latitude.		Longitude.		May and June, 1840.	
			°	'	°	'	Thermometer.	In Shade. Barometer.
Jaffa			32	3 25	34	45 55	65 to 70	29.60 to 30.10
To Arsouf	N N E $\frac{3}{4}$ E	16 miles					" "	" "
To Cæsarea	N by E $\frac{1}{2}$ E	16 miles	32	32 35	34	54 30	68 to 74	29.70 to 30.10
To Cape Carmel	N N E $\frac{1}{4}$ N	20 miles	32	58 10	34	59 23	" "	" "
To Cape Blanco	N E $\frac{1}{4}$ N	15 miles					" "	" "
To Ancient Tyre	N E by N	13 miles	33	17 0	35	14 11	70 to 71	29.80 29.90 30
To Ancient Sidon	N E by N	19 miles	33	34 5	35	23 44	75 to 90	May 13 and 14 29.50 to 30.10

To	N N E $\frac{1}{2}$ E	19 miles	33 49 45 35 27 54	During six weeks from 72 to 88 29.50 to 30.10
To Beirut	N N E $\frac{1}{2}$ E	19 miles	33 49 45 35 27 54	During six weeks from 72 to 88 29.50 to 30.10
To Cape Madonna	N E by N	30 miles	34 19 4 35 42 0	Most prevalent Winds Westerly
To Outer Point of the Bay of Tripoli	N N $\frac{1}{2}$ E	12 miles	Passing the Bay of Tripoli, with several Villiages, Ruins, &c. on the Coast.	
To Tortosa	About N $\frac{1}{2}$ W	20 miles	} The Easterly Winds insufferably hot about the end of May; in sun glasses rose to 110°, 115°, and 120°	
To Cape Zereat	N by E	About 40 miles		
To Cape Possidi	N N E	22 miles	Neither Rain nor Dews	
To Cape Khynzyr	On the Same Point	23 miles	Passing the entrance of the Orontes, or River of Antioch, with Villages, Ruins, &c.	
To Karadish-Bournon	N W by W	About 25 miles	36 32 40 35 21 20	Crossing the Gulf or Bay of Iskenderoon

I have not presumed to alter the Latitudes, &c. of these places as I had not sufficient time fairly to discover this point; but, from some observations, am inclined to think Cape Beirut is not correct in Latitude.

Eden & Co. Printers, 14. Basinghall-street.

