

are placed beneath to receive the sap, which is like oily milk. When collected in vessels, it becomes solid. It is an excellent remedy for headache, incipient suffusion of the eyes, and dimness of sight. It bears therefore a high price, especially as it is produced in no other place."

Dioscorides¹ asserts erroneously that balsam grows only in a certain valley of India and in Egypt; while Ibn al-Baitār,² in his Arabic translation of Dioscorides, has him correctly say that it grows only in Judæa, in the district called Rūr (the valley of the Jordan). It is easily seen how Judæa in Greek writing could be misread for India.

To Pliny,³ balsamum was only known as a product of Judæa (*uni terrarum Iudæae concessum*). He speaks of the two gardens after Theophrastus, and gives a lengthy description of three different kinds of balsamum.

In describing Palestine, Tacitus⁴ says that in all its productions it equals Italy, besides possessing the palm and the balsam; and the far-famed tree excited the cupidity of successive invaders. Pompey exhibited it in the streets of Rome in 65 B.C., and one of the wonderful trees accompanied the triumph of Vespasian in A.D. 79. During the invasion of Titus, two battles took place at the balsam-groves of Jericho, the last being intended to prevent the Jews from destroying the trees. They were then made public property, and were placed under the protection of an imperial guard; but it is not recorded how long the two plantations survived. In this respect, the Chinese report of the *Yu yan tsa tsu* is of some importance, for it is apt to teach that the balm of Gilead must still have been in existence in the latter part of the ninth century. It further presents clear-cut evidence of the fact that Judæa was included in the Chinese notion of the country Fu-lin.

Abd al-Laṭīf (1161-1231)⁵ relates how in his time balsam was collected in Egypt. The operation was preferably conducted in the summer. The tree was shorn of its leaves, and incisions were made in the trunk, precaution being taken against injuring the wood. The sap was collected in jars dug in the ground during the heat, then they were taken out to be exposed to the sun. The oil floated on the surface and was cleaned of foreign particles. This was the true and purest balsam, forming only the tenth part of the total quantity produced by a tree. At present, in Arabia leaves and branches of the tree are boiled. The first

¹ I, 18.

² LECLERC, *Traité des simples*, Vol. I, 255.

³ XII, 25, § III.

⁴ *Hist.*, v, 6.

⁵ SILVESTRE DE SACY, *Relation de l'Égypte*, p. 20 (Paris, 1810).