

if it had been rubbed with caustic; our lips were parched with thirst, and we toiled painfully along, every step of the horse breaking through the nitrous crust of soft bare soil, and now and then plunging knee-deep into a morass, overgrown with reeds and rushes. A few stunted trees, their leaves crusted with salt, are seen, among them the *osher* or apple of Sodom, that fruit

" Which grows
Near that bituminous lake where Sodom stood."

I had no relish to examine that deceitful fruit, which plucked, turned to ashes in the hand. A thicket of poplars, willows, and sycamores hid the sacred stream from our view. But soon we got a glimpse of Jordan, and leaping from our horse we stood on the banks of the river so sacred with historical associations. What a muddy little, turbulent, treacherous torrent, and how it runs, whirling and eddying along between its steep banks that are scarcely one hundred feet apart. But for its associations it would be one of the most uninteresting streams. But our halting place is at the ancient Ford, the pilgrims' bathing-place, the traditional spot where the Israelites "passed over, nigh against Jericho;" where Elijah smote the Jordan with his mantle, when its waters rolled back to give a passage for the prophet; where Jesus was baptized, "when the heavens opened and the Spirit descended like a dove and rested upon Him."

While the western banks are flat and low, the eastern banks are steep, and from them rise the rugged and precipitous mountains of Moab. Numerous ravines intersect this mountain chain, and lofty peaks rise here and there. Yonder, too, in the same lofty range, are Pisgah and Nebo, where the prophet, with eye undimmed, surveyed the Land of Promise.

We were anxious to bathe in Jordan, but it was deep and swift, and its banks precipitous, and we did not care about being drowned in even so sacred a river. The main channel is not more than twelve or fifteen feet deep, but the river falls nearly a thousand feet in its sinuous course of two hundred miles, and this gives it a very rapid flow, hence the name *Jarad*, to descend rapidly.

From the Ford we rode to the irregular clay hills which form the highest bank of the renowned river. We passed through a forest of thorn trees, to the ruined heaps of ancient Jericho, the