

clearly and pleasantly does he relate the very interesting and valuable discoveries made by him and his able associates.

It is strange to think that so little has hitherto been known of this vestibule of the Land of Promise. For upwards of a thousand years hardly a footstep, save that of the wandering Bedouin, has passed over this wilderness. Yet, to our mind, there is something singularly touching in the history and geographical position itself of this "Land of Moab." Expressly prohibited from "entering the congregation of the Lord"* the Moabite could, like Moses on Pisgah, view from a distance the sacred soil on which the sleepless eyes of Israel's God rested from the beginning to the end of the year; but a Dead Sea rolled its heavy waves between him and the sacred land of Judah.

With ancestors not very distantly connected, the people of Moab, though possessed, for the most part, with a strong national animosity against the Israelites, were yet at times far from unfriendly.† The beautiful historic idyl in which the graceful form of "Ruth the Moabitess" constitutes the central figure, is a memorable exemplification of this. What a "full reward"—a blessing reaching, like that given by Jacob to Joseph, "to the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills," was given to the loving fidelity of this daughter of Moab, who came "from the East" to sit down in the Land of Promise, under the overshadowing wings of the Lord God of Israel. As the great-grand-mother of King David and the far-off ancestress, according to the flesh, of his Son and Lord, she has redeemed Moab from obscurity, and appears herself as a bright roseate cloud heralding the Dayspring from on High to illuminate the world. Thus was Moab, in more than one sense, *toward the sun rising*.

But Moab, as a nation, never forsook the abominations which

* That is, according to Rabbinical interpretation, prohibited from marrying an Israelitish woman; being regarded, generally, in a state of perpetual ceremonial uncleanness. This did not prevent them from becoming proselytes, and thus enrolling themselves as true servants of the living God.

† Ritter (*Comp. Geog.*) has well shown that the victories of the Israelites over the Amorites, Og and Sihon, would have a tendency to produce a sympathetic feeling between the people of Moab and the Israelites, as the Amorites were the common enemy of both; and the territories won from the Amorites by Israel, had formerly been wrested by them from the Moabites, Jabbok being originally the North border of Moab.